

Message Text

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41

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02

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FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9751

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

USMISSION USUN

USIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

UNCLAS DAMASCUS 6497

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, SY, LE

SUBJECT: SPET 26-27 SYRIAN MEDIA REPORT ASAD REAFFIRMATION OF SYRIAN
ROLE IN LEBANON IN SPEECH TO MILITARY

1. SPET 26 MORNING PAPERS HAD BEEN DISTRIBUTED WHEN PALESTINIAN
GUERRILLAS OCCUPIED SEMIRAMIS HOTEL BUT COVERAGE OF THIS
OPERATION DOMINATED MEDIA REST OF SUNDAY AND SEPT 27 (SEPTELS).
SEPT 26 PRESS BANNERED: "ASAD SPENDS SECOND DAY OF
FEAST WITH TROOPS AT FRONT LINES. TELLS THEM, 'LEBANON'S
EVENTS AIMED AT LEBANON, SYRIA, PALESTINIAN CAUSE AND ARAB
NATION. CONSPIRATORS WANTED TO CREATE AN ISRAEL IN LEBANON,
SO WE FOILED THEIR SCHEME. WE RESISTED PRESSURES AND
TEMPTATIONS, AND WE REJECTED ANY SETTLEMENT ABORTING OUR
NATIONAL CAUSE; THAT WAS WHY WE OPPOSED SINAI ACCORD. OUR
RPRINCIPLED STAND WILL NOT CHANGE WHATEVER THE
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CIRCUMSTANCES; SYRIA'S POST-OCTOBER WAR ROLE WILL BE

MAINTAINED. YOU WERE THE ONES WHO RESTORED HONOR OF OUR NATION IN OCT 1973, AND IT IS YOU WHO ARE NOW DEFENDING HOMELAND AND LEBANON. WE HAD GIVEN PALESTINIANS PREFERENCE OVER OUR OWN FORCES, AND WE HAD GIVEN THEM OUR OWN WEAPONS."

2. SEPT 26 PRESS NOTED THAT SARKIS HAD ACCEPTED RESIGNATION OF KARAME CABINET. SEPT 27 MEDIA REPORTED SERIES OF MEETINGS BETWEEN NEW PRES AND VARIOUS LEBANESE POLITICIANS, INCLUDING KARAME AND SALAM. SARKIS-ARAFAT MEETING TOOK PLACE IN MUSEUM AREA SEPT 26, PRESS NOTED, AND ADDED THAT CALM PREVAILED IN THAT AREA. PRESS CITED "INFORMED SOURCE" SPECUALTION THAT NEW LEBANESE GOVT WOULD BE FORMED BY OCT 2, AND PREDICTED COALITION OF DIVERSE FACTIONS THAT WOULD FACILITATE PLANNED DIALOGUE TO DISCUSS SETTLEMENT FORMULA. SOME SURPRISES EXPECTED BY THESE SOURCES IN TERMS OF CABINET PERSONNEL.

3. SEPT 26 PRESS NOTED VIOLENT CLASHES IN COMMERCIAL DISTRICT OF BEIRUT, ALONG DAMASCUS ROAD AND ON TRIPOLI-ZGHORTA FRONT. SEPT 27 PRESS REPORTED CONTINUATION OF CLASHES IN BEIRUT AND OTHER LEBANESE DISTRICTS.

4. PRESS REPORTED DECLARATION BY SARKIS THAT HE PREPARED TO ATTEND ARAB SUMMIT.

5. AL-BAATH EDITORIAL ASSERTED THAT, "ANY MANEUVER TO IMPEDE EXECUTION OF SARKIS PLAN WILL BE CONSIDERED AN ATTEMPT TO ESCALATE SITUATIONAND SABOTAGE THIS EFFORT. SYRIA WILL NOT TOLERATE THIS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. ONCE AGAIN, WE REITERATE THIS IS GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO EMBARK ON NEW PHASE IN BUILDING DEMOCRATIC LEBANON."

6. COMMENT: OCCASION OF FESTIVITIES MARKING END OF RAMADAN PROVIDED ASAD WITH CHANCE TO MEET WITH SYRIAN TROOPS AND OFFICERS TO PROMOTE HIS LEBANESE POLICY AND ALLOW THEM TO VOICE ANY CONCERNS THEY MAY HAVE ABOUT SYRIA'S PROPER COURSE IN LEBANON. MEDIA STILL UPBEAT ON SARKIS' EFFORTS TO FORM GOVT THAT WILL FACILITATE SETTLEMENT ARRANGEMENTS.

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